

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Nicole Black
Date of Birth: 24/06/1980
Care Setting: MARGARET AND JIM - FOSTER FAMILY
Dates: 1981
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was placed into care at a very young age. Records state that I was taken into care because my biological mother had set fire to herself. However, I have since spoken directly with my mum, and she told me that this was not true. She explained that there had been an accident involving an electric fire, not an intentional act. Knowing this now has had a profound impact on me, as it means I was taken away from my family for no valid reason. I believe I was failed by the system and removed from what should have been a happy and healthy home.

I was then placed into foster care with Margaret and Jim when I was around 2 to 3 years old. This was the only foster home I lived in before being adopted, and it is where I experienced severe neglect. I have been told that when I arrived there at around 3 years old, I was unable to speak. The only thing I had was a toy can that I would play with repeatedly. It later took my adoptive parents significant time, care, and patience to help me learn how to speak properly.

During my time in that foster home, I was forced to wear clothes and shoes that were far too small for me, which caused me both physical pain and long-term damage. I was not potty trained and was still made to wear nappies at the age of 3. I was also made to sleep in a cot, which was not appropriate for my age. This level of neglect has deeply affected me, both physically and emotionally. I still suffer to this day with serious bunions and ongoing foot pain, which I believe is a direct result of being forced to wear shoes that did not fit me properly.

I do not remember the name of the area or the family name of where I was living at the time, but I clearly remember the fear and confusion I experienced. I was constantly wetting myself because I had never been taught how to use the toilet. This would cause me extreme panic and distress. I did not understand what was happening to me or what I was doing wrong. My adoptive parents later told me they could see how terrified I was, especially around using the toilet. I would scream and cry uncontrollably when I needed to go, as I associated it with fear and punishment.

This fear followed me into later childhood. When I was invited to birthday parties, I would become extremely

distressed and frightened at the thought of needing to use the toilet. I would refuse to go out or attend social events because of this overwhelming fear. I was also deeply afraid that I might somehow be tricked into going back into that foster home, which caused me constant anxiety and mistrust. The experience changed my life in a way that has never left me.

I was also told that I would frequently flinch and appear frightened, especially around adults and particularly around Margaret and Jim. I lived in a constant state of fear. There was no sense of safety, comfort, or care. I do not remember experiencing any kindness, fun, or empathy during that time. Instead, I remember feeling alone, distressed, and mentally overwhelmed, as though I was “going crazy” with no one there to help me.

I understand that even the social workers involved had concerns about the care I was receiving. I was told that a social worker would become extremely angry and confront Margaret and Jim, asking them what they had done with the money that was meant for my care, but they did not provide answers. This raises serious concerns about how I was treated and neglected during that period.

I remained in that environment for approximately a year before I was finally removed and adopted. My adoptive parents have always expressed how disgusted and shocked they were that I had been left in those conditions for so long. They immediately recognised that I had been badly neglected and left without proper care, attention, or support.

When I went to live with my adoptive parents, it was clear how severely affected I was. I was an extremely anxious and worried child. I did not know how to use the toilet properly, and I had no basic early education or developmental support. I struggled significantly in all areas of my early development. My adoptive parents worked hard to support me, especially as I have since been diagnosed with autism and dyslexia. I firmly believe that the neglect and trauma I experienced at the hands of Margaret and Jim contributed significantly to these difficulties and made my challenges far worse.

The impact of what I went through has stayed with me for my entire life. I struggle deeply with trust and find it very difficult to rely on anyone. I often feel isolated and alone, as though I cannot form safe or secure attachments to others. This has affected my relationships, my sense of safety in the world, and my overall wellbeing.

At the age of 14, I was groomed by a 25-year-old man. Looking back, I now understand that I did not know right from wrong in the way I should have at that age. I was vulnerable, and I trusted too easily because I was desperate for someone to show me love and make me feel cared for. This vulnerability is directly linked to the neglect and lack of affection I experienced in early childhood.

I have suffered for my entire life as a result of what happened to me in care. I continue to live with anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and it feels like a never-ending cycle. The trauma I experienced has shaped who I am today, affecting my mental health, my physical health, my relationships, and my ability to feel safe and secure in the world. The impact has been lifelong, and I continue to struggle with the consequences every day.